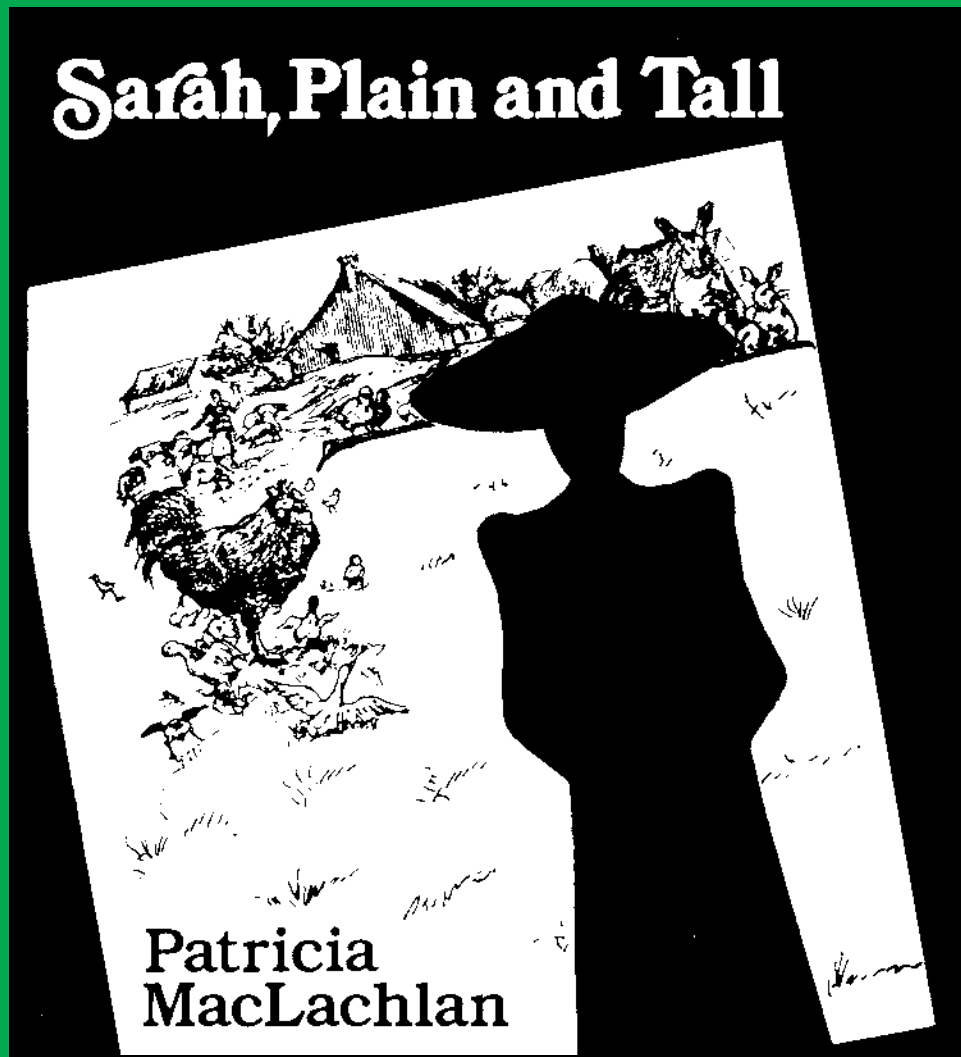


Novel•Ties



A Study Guide

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LEARNING LINKS

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For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide consists of lessons to use in conjunction with the book *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel on its reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for guided reading by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter or group of chapters; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? Where and when do you think it takes place? Have you read anything else by the same author?
2. *Sarah, Plain and Tall* was the Newbery Medal winner in 1986. Do some research to find out about this award. Learn about its origin and the titles of other books that have also received this award. For whom is it named? Why is it such an honor to receive the Newbery Medal?
3. Locate photographs depicting life on the prairie that were taken by early photographers. Notice the sparsely populated terrain, the sod houses, and the faces of the inhabitants which mirror the daily struggle of their lives. Display these photographs in your classroom as you read the book.
4. Locate photographs of life in a New England coastal village in the second half of the nineteenth century. Compare and contrast life here with life on the prairie. Notice the houses, the clothing, the landscape, the occupations, and the appearances of the people. Display these photographs in your classroom as you read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*.
5. Read *My Prairie Year: Based on the Diary of Elenore Plaisted*, by Brett Harvey and illustrated by Deborah Kogan Ray (Holiday House, New York, 1986). Not only is this a good companion book for *Sarah, Plain and Tall* because of the information it contains, but the illustrations are beautiful and present an excellent picture of the prairie.
6. Find a song book that contains "Summer is Icumen in" and learn to sing it with your classmates.
7. **Science Connection:** Obtain a piece of mica and notice how it separates into thin sheets. Observe its special qualities.
8. Find a book that describes and illustrates seashells that abound on the New England coast. Be sure to look at pictures of various kinds of clams, oysters, mussels, and scallops.
9. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide to learn about mail order brides. What kind of woman might have answered such an ad? Read some "Personals" in a current magazine or newspaper and compare their purpose with ads for mail order brides.
10. An author may provide chapter titles. The title may be a main idea, the name of a character or place, or a "catchy" phrase to get the reader's interest. Since Patricia MacLachlan did not write chapter titles, create one after you finish each chapter. Use the chart on the following page.

CHAPTER 1

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its meaning on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. homely | a. vigorous; forceful |
| 2. dusk | b. ill-tempered |
| 3. wretched | c. plain; unattractive |
| 4. feisty | d. twilight, the period of partial darkness between day and night |
| 5. energetic | e. miserable |

.....

1. If you have to begin your farm chores at dawn, you will probably want to go to sleep right after _____.
2. The children became _____ after two nights with little sleep.
3. Only a(n) _____ woman could endure life on the prairie.
4. Even his parents felt it was hard to admire such a(n) _____ baby.
5. Even on cold, _____ winter mornings, you will have to milk the cows on the farm.

Questions:

1. Why does Caleb repeatedly ask Anna to tell him the story about the time when he was born? Why does he want Anna to remember the words of Mama's songs?
2. Does Anna hold a grudge against Caleb because their mother died on the morning after he was born? How can you tell?
3. What does Papa mean when he says, "maybe there's a way to remember them [the old songs]"?
4. Why does Papa advertise for a wife in the newspaper?